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ABSTRACT

This lesson will introduce intermediate students to the Japanese poetic form of "haiku," which is most effectively taught after students have an understanding of syllables. The lesson plan's introductory activity is designed to introduce students to the geography of Japan, as well as Japanese culture through Asian art and music--after learning about and listening to some examples of haiku, as the next activity, students will write their own haiku. The lesson's final activity has students illustrate and "publish" their finished poems in the style of a Japanese scroll using rice paper, ink, and watercolor. The lesson presents an overview; suggests lesson length and grade level; lists subjects and subtopics; cites dimensions of learning and intelligences being addressed; notes equipment and materials needed; lists teacher resources and general resources; and outlines National Arts Education Standards and other standards. It also gives instructional objectives and strategies; provides a detailed, step-by-step instructional plan; and suggests assessment and extension activities. Lists teacher references and offers suggestions of book and musical recordings to be used with the lesson. (NKA)

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Curricula, Lessons and Activities

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You Too Can Haiku

Resource Type: lesson

Length: Approximately four 45-minute class periods

Grade: 4,5,6

Subjects: Language Arts, Performing Arts, Social Studies, Visual Arts

Subtopics: Geography, History, Minisite: NSO Asia, Music, Social: Asian Studies, Social: Multicultural

Intelligences Being Addressed:

- Intrapersonal Intelligence
- Logical/Mathematical Intelligence
- Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence
- Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence
- Visual/Spatial Intelligence

Dimensions of Learning:

- Extension and refinement of knowledge
- Meaningful use of knowledge

Overview: This lesson will introduce students to the Japanese poetic form of haiku. (Note: haiku is most effectively taught after students have an understanding of syllables.) As an introductory activity, students will be

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CS 511 369

briefly introduced to the geography of Japan, as well as Japanese culture through examples of Asian art and music. After learning about and listening to some examples of haiku, they will write their own haiku. Then, students will illustrate and "publish" their finished poems in the style of a Japanese scroll using rice paper, ink, and watercolor.

Equipment:

- Computer: Mac or PC with Internet access
- Sound System : CD player

Media & Materials:

Printouts: This lesson has printouts. They are referenced in the "Student Supplies" or "Other Materials" sections below.

Student Supplies:

- notebook paper
- pencils
- glue

Other Materials:

- rice paper (can substitute onion-skin paper)
- chart paper
- black permanent markers
- watercolors
- paint brushes
- thin cord
- 12" dowels (two per student)
- dictionary
- thesaurus
- map of Japan
- world map
- examples of haiku
- reproductions/slides/transparencies of Japanese art
- recordings of Japanese music
- a finished scroll to use as a model (created by teacher, following procedures outlined in the Instructional Plan)

Related Check your reading, literature, or English textbooks. Many of these have

Textbooks: poetry selections and might include some examples of haiku.

Teacher Internet Resources:

Lesson and Extension Specific Resources:

- **Asian Studies Network Information Center: Japanese Music**
  http://asnic.utexas.edu/asnic/countries/japan/japmusic.html

  Housed at the University of Texas, Austin, the ASNIC contains a wealth of information on the history, culture, politics, and economy of Japan. This resource includes background information on haiku and Japanese music.

- **Los Angeles County Museum of Art: Japanese Painting**
  http://www.lacma.org/art/perm_col/japanese/painting/paint.htm

  This resource provides a good introduction to the aesthetics and technique involved in Japanese painting, including information on four celebrated Japanese painters.

- **National Symphony Orchestra's Virtual Tour of China and Japan**
  http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/nso/asian/artsedge.html

  This comprehensive ARTSEDGE mini-site introduces students to the culture of China and Japan by "virtually" exploring the places toured by the National Symphony Orchestra on their two-week trip to Asian in 1999.

General Internet Resources:

- **A Haiku Homepage**
  http://home.clara.net/pka/haiku/haiku.htm

  This site provides examples of haikus by Basho (1644-1694) and provides hints and guidelines for writing haikus.

- **Haiku Society of America**
  http://www.hsa-haiku.org/

  The Haiku Society is a national organization that supports and promotes authors of, and individuals interested in, the haikus in America. The site includes haiku composition tips, competitions, publications, and teacher resources.

- **Haiku for People**

http://www.toyomasu.com/haiku/

This site includes an explanation of classical vs. modern haiku, tips on writing, and a list of haikus categorized by subject for further reading.

National Standards for Arts Education:

- K-4 Music Content Standard 6 : Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
- K-4 Music Content Standard 9 : Understanding music in relation to history and culture
- K-4 Visual Art Content Standard 1 : Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
- K-4 Visual Art Content Standard 4 : Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
- K-4 Visual Art Content Standard 5 : Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others
- K-4 Visual Art Content Standard 6 : Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines
- 5-8 Music Content Standard 6 : Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
- 5-8 Music Content Standard 9 : Understanding music in relation to history and culture
- 5-8 Visual Art Content Standard 1 : Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
- 5-8 Visual Art Content Standard 4 : Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
- 5-8 Visual Art Content Standard 5 : Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others
- 5-8 Visual Art Content Standard 6 : Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

Click here for additional information on the National Standards for Arts Education

Other National Standards:

- Geography #2
- History #7 (K-4)
- Language Arts #1

Source of Standards: McREL

For more on the Standards in other subjects, please refer to the Mid-continent Regional Education Laboratory (McREL) website.

State

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Standards, if any:

To search the State Arts Standards, please visit the National Conference of State Legislatures website.

Instructional Objectives: Students will:

- count the number of syllables in each line in haiku
- listen to examples of haiku
- describe the Japanese poetic form of haiku
- write an original haiku
- illustrate an original haiku
- listen to Japanese music
- discuss Asian art
- discuss Japan's geographic features and location

Strategies:

Classroom discussion
Peer evaluation
Creative writing
Direct instruction
Hands-on project
Imaginative thinking
Interpreting
Teacher demonstration

Instructional Plan: Note: Although this lesson has been planned to be taught over a four-day period, you may find that you need to adjust the time allotted for your class.

Introduction

Students should be familiar with the following vocabulary:

- island
- archipelago
- hemisphere
- latitude
- longitude

If necessary, introduce these words to students at the beginning of the lesson.

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Distribute maps to the students. If possible, use a large class map as a visual aid at the front of the room.

Explain to the students that Japan is made up of four large islands and thousands of smaller islands. Note that it is an example of an archipelago.

Ask students the following questions, using the map of Japan as a visual reference.

- What bodies of water surround Japan?
- In what hemisphere is it located?
- What is its latitude and longitude?

Help students to make the connection that Japan is located in the Eastern hemisphere. Explain that this area of the world is sometimes simply referred to as the "East." Ask students if they have heard of the term "Middle East." Explain that this region is also found in the Eastern hemisphere.

Japanese Painting and Music

Ask the students to share some examples of landscape painting that they might have seen. Some students may remember paintings they have seen at museums, in books, or in their own homes. Then, show the students some examples of landscape paintings created by "Western" artists (i.e., Claude Monet or Vincent van Gogh).

Next, show the students some examples of Japanese landscape paintings. (See the Teacher Internet Resources section and Teacher References section for examples.) Ask them how this style of painting compares to landscapes they might have seen in the United States. Have students name some of the characteristics of Japanese landscape painting. They should be as specific as possible when they are describing pieces of art, noting, for example, whether the Japanese paintings set a particular mood.

Next, listen to examples of classical music. Students should share how they would describe the genre of music (i.e., instrumentation, mood, etc.) Have the students listen to some traditional Japanese instrumental music. (See the Teacher Internet Resources section and Teacher References section for examples.) Ask them to discuss the types of sounds they hear, and whether they think these sounds are being made by musical instruments of which they are familiar.

Writing Haiku

Before proceeding, review the following concepts, if necessary:

- lesson vocabulary
- comparisons made by students between "Eastern" and "Western" art and music
- the definition and concept of a syllable

Explain to the students that a unique form of poetry called haiku was created in Japan. Many of the types of landscapes one can see in the Japanese paintings viewed earlier are referred to in traditional haiku, such as in haiku by Basho, in which the poet mentions cherry blossoms, the kiri tree, and particular bridges. Haiku began in Japan in approximately 1200 A.D. Haiku has a special poetic rhythm: it consists of seventeen syllables written in three lines. The first line contains five syllables, the second line contains seven syllables, and the third line contains five syllables.

Explain that haiku is usually written about something in nature. Animals are frequent subjects of haikus.

A well-written haiku should also include a *kigo*. A kigo is a word that hints at a particular season of the year without actually naming the season. For example, squirrels might indicate autumn.

Share an example of a haiku with the students. Have the haiku written out on chart paper so the students can see it written. First, read the haiku aloud to the students. Then, have them clap out and count the syllables. The following is a sample haiku by the poet Issa, suitable for use in the classroom:

The least of breezes
Blows and the dry sky is filled
With the voice of pines

As a class, discuss the following questions:

- Does this haiku have the right number of syllables in each line?
- Does it follow the 5-7-5 pattern?
- Does this haiku make you think of any season?
- Does it have a kigo?
- Is an animal mentioned in this haiku?
- What elements in nature are mentioned?
- What does this haiku make you think about?
- Is the tone of the haiku happy or sad?

- What do you think the poet was thinking about when he wrote this? (Remember, there are no right or wrong answers to this one, just ideas!)

Note: The sample haiku and discussion questions are taken from a Cultural Connection activity on the ArtsEdge Mini-site NSO Virtual Tour of Asia

Read two or three more examples of haiku to the class. See the Teacher References section below and the Teacher Internet resources section above for examples of haiku. Display the haikus on chart paper so that all of the students can read along as you read aloud. Have the students clap and count the syllables. Continue with the same discussion questions as outlined above.

Next, tell the students that they will each write an original haiku. Review the format for writing a correct haiku. Have a brief brainstorming session to generate a list of possible "nature" topics. Write these topics on chart paper.

Allow the students sufficient time to write an original haiku. You may wish to play some of the recordings of traditional Japanese music to inspire students as they are writing.

When they have completed their poems, have the students work in pairs, reading their haikus to each other, and counting and clapping out the syllables to make sure they are correct. Students can further discuss their poems using the questions listed above.

Allow students to share their haiku with the class.

Creating a Scroll

Tell students that they will transfer their poems onto a scroll.

Display for the students a completed scroll (prepared prior to teaching the lesson), and explain the following process for creating a scroll.

1. Before beginning their scrolls, students should plan their watercolor design and lettering by completing a mock up sketch. (Note: You may wish to ask the art teacher at your school to assist with this part of the lesson.)

2. Have students practice using the watercolors. It is important for them to understand that watercolors are thinner than tempera paint. There are two methods for applying the color to the paper. They can wet the paper

with plain water first, and then add the color. Or, they can apply the water and color at the same time. The students might want to experiment with this process for a few minutes before applying the watercolor to their final scroll.

3. Students should apply the watercolor to their scroll before adding the lettering. Using the watercolors, students should paint a scene in the style of the Japanese paintings they have viewed and discussed (paintings should use muted colors, broad brush strokes, etc.).

4. Have students neatly copy the haiku onto the rice paper. Students may wish to copy their poems by using a pencil and/or placing a lined piece of paper underneath the rice paper so their writing will stay straight. Students should trace over the pencil lines with a permanent black marker. (Note: Be sure to use permanent markers; a water-soluble marker could smear.)

5. When the pictures have dried, the students should glue thin dowels to the top and bottom of the paper so that they can be rolled up like a scroll. Dowels should extend beyond the edges of the paper on each side. Thin cord can be tied to either side of the dowel at the top to create a hanger for the poem.

Display the completed scrolls in the classroom.

Assessment: Students will be assessed on their completed projects. Are their haikus correctly formatted? How well does the painted scroll depict the mood of the poem?

Extensions: The lesson can be enhanced by providing more information about Japanese music. You may wish to work with the music teacher to teach the students about "Sakura," a traditional Japanese tune.

Teacher References:

To obtain prints of Japanese paintings:

Lyons, Nancy Hague, and Sarah Ridley. *Japan: Images and Words: An Interdisciplinary Unit for Sixth-Grade Art and Language Arts Classes.* Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1994.

This kit brings the Freer Gallery of Art's world-renowned collection of Japanese paintings into your classroom. The packet includes six full-color posters, six slides, and six 8 x 10", black-and-white photographs. To order the kit, send a check or school purchase order for $28.50 payable

to:

Education, Freer/Sackler
School and Family Programs Education Department
Freer Gallery of Art/Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, DC 20560

Slide, prints, and posters of Asian art can be obtained by writing to: Museum Shop, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560. A $4.50 shipping and handling fee will be added to the cost of each order.

Suggested books and musical recordings to be used with this lesson include:

Gollub, Matthew. *Cool Melons—Turn to Frogs! The Life and Poems of Issa*. Illustrated by Kazuko G. Stone. New York: Lee & Low Books, 1998.

Hamill, Sam, trans. *The Sound of Water: Haiku by Basho, Buson, Issa, and Other Poets* Illustrated by Kaji Aso. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2000.

Myers, Tim. *Basho and the Fox*. Illustrated by Oshi S. Han. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish Corp, 2000.

Malm, William P. *Traditional Japanese Music and Musical Instruments*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2001.

Shimada, Aiko, et al. *Oyasumi: Japanese Lullabies and Restful Melodies*. Koto World. Audio CD.

Various artists. *Festival of Japanese Music in Hawaii*. Smithsonian Folkways. Audio CD 08885.

Various artists. *Lullaby for the Moon: Japanese Music for Koto and Shakuhachi*. Blue Note Records. Audio CD 59271.

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